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WITNESS TAMPERING CONSPIRATOR SENTENCED TO 4 YEARS IN THE
JANUARY 15, 2005 HARWOOD FIREBOMBING ATTEMPT

*Defendant Made False 911 Call to Help Co-Conspirators Target a Baltimore Woman Who
Tried to Stop Them from Selling Drugs in Her Neighborhood*

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Shakia Watkins, age 19, of Baltimore, was sentenced today to four years in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release for conspiracy to commit witness tampering in connection with the January 15, 2005 arson of a residence located in the Harwood community of Baltimore, Maryland, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein said, "Anyone involved in any scheme to intimidate a witness should be prepared to spend time in prison, no matter what the defendant's role is in the scheme. Shakia Watkins did not make or throw the firebombs, but she tried to help make the plan succeed. This sentence sends a strong message that witness intimidation will not be tolerated."

According to the agreed statement of facts presented to the court on November 28, 2005 as part of Watkins' plea agreement, on January 15, 2005, Watkins, along with co-defendants Terrence Smith, age 24, Nakie Harris, age 30, Richard Royal, age 21, Jackie Brewington, age 19, Andre Wilkins, age 32, and Isaac Smith, age 26, all of Baltimore, and others conspired together to firebomb the home of a Baltimore resident. Several of these individuals, including Watkins, gathered at a house in the 300 block of E. 27th Street where Nakie Harris directed the manufacturing of five or six Molotov Cocktails by emptying the beer bottles, filling them with gasoline and inserting rags soaked with gasoline to serve as "wicks." The devices were intended to be used to firebomb a residence located in the Harwood community of Baltimore. Prior to the devices being thrown at the house, Watkins was directed to call the Baltimore City "911" operator to report a fictitious crime in order to divert police attention away from the area of the firebombing. Watkins and others knew that Terrence Smith ordered the firebombing in retaliation for the owner of the residence communicating drug activity to the police. Several of the defendants complained that they had difficulty conducting their drug activity in the area because of the victim's constant calls to law enforcement officials. Watkins admitted that she, along with other persons named in this indictment, participated in this conspiracy with the intent

to prevent the victim from reporting past and future drug activity in the area to law enforcement authorities.

Terrence Smith, Harris and Royal were convicted by a federal jury on December 13, 2005 of conspiracy to commit witness tampering, witness tampering by attempted murder, use of firearms in a crime of violence, using fire and explosives in a felony and making firearms, in connection with the January 15, 2005 arson of the residence. Terrence Smith was sentenced on February 21, 2006 to 80 years in prison. On February 3, 2006, U.S. District Judge J. Frederick Motz also sentenced Harris and Royal to 60 years in prison each. Jackie Brewington, Andre Watkins, and Isaac Smith pled guilty prior to the trial to witness tampering and use of fire and explosives to commit a felony, and face a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison. Their sentencing has not yet been scheduled.

An additional defendant, Cedrick Bowman, age 24, of Baltimore was indicted on December 13, 2005 in this case on the same charges. A tentative trial date for July, 2006 has been set.

United States Attorney Rosenstein praised the investigative work coordinated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Baltimore City Fire Department; Baltimore City Police Department; and the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant U.S. Attorneys A. David Copperthite and Kwame J. Manley, who prosecuted the case.